

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION MEETING
May 28, 2014
Reporting for the month of April 2014

AWOLs: There were **128** AWOLs involving **111** youth: 17 youth AWOLED more than once in this same month.

44 remain AWOL	0 HOP
38 returned to GH	0 CCP
29 are in JH	0 Terminated

Outstanding AWOL detainments from previous months and arrests in April 2014:

7 youth were arrested / detained in April who had AWOLED in previous months. **2** are currently in JH, **2** are in a GH, **2** are in Camp, and **1** was placed on Informal Probation (725A WIC) and released to DCFS.

Statistics and Findings regarding AWOLs in April:

- 1)** 37% of the AWOL incidents were Hispanic males with a mean age of 15.8 years. The second largest population of AWOLED youth during the month of April was Hispanic females with a mean age of 15.8 years accounted for 24% of the AWOLs. Black males and females accounted for 22% and 11% respectively. The overall average age of youth who AWOLED in April was 16.0 years.

Recommendation:

- During the month of April, there was a shift in the age for AWOLED Hispanic males. Typically, the average age for the male Hispanic population has been above the age of 16 years, yet in April, the age decreased to 15.8 years of age. With that being said, Hispanic males have continued to represent the largest number of AWOL incidents for the past 20 months. The reason for the large number of Hispanic male AWOLs may likely be a representation of the general population of LA County. Even if that is a fact, it still means this is the population that Probation needs to work with to decrease AWOLs. DPOs, Therapists, or other GH and County staff, should interview at-risk youth (mainly Hispanic males around the age of 16) to find out about certain feelings related to age, gender, or cultural stresses and consider possible solutions to decrease these feelings/stresses.
 - Make DPOs and GH staff aware of the demographics that are at most risk of AWOLing. Research and identify possible methods or daily practices of assisting youth to come to a less stressful state of mind.
- 2)** The sooner the GH notifies Probation staff of the AWOL, the faster Probation can begin the steps necessary to detain the youth. For the month of April, all but two of the GHs were compliant with notifying Probation about the AWOLED youth within the required time frame. Additionally, one of the Relative / Non-Relative placements did not notify Probation of an AWOL.

Recommendation:

- In the last 9 months the GHs continue to show a consistent pattern of improvement in timeliness and consistency with regards to AWOL reporting.
 - Reiterate to GH staff and to legal guardians of youth the importance of reporting an AWOL as soon as the incident occurs. Specifically, all AWOLs should be reported within 24 hours in order to expedite the issuance of a bench warrant and the recovery of the youth. Statistics should be shared with GH staff to illustrate the real results of delayed reporting.
- 3) As with previous months, certain GHs showed a higher percentage of AWOLs than other GHs. This was determined by taking the number of AWOLs for that month and comparing it to the number of beds available in the GH (population). It is important to note that youth who AWOLED more than once in the same GH were only counted as 1 AWOL. For April 2014, 5 GHs had a 30% or higher AWOL rate. This percentage is slightly lower than last month's findings (8).

Recommendation:

- Continue to track the frequency of AWOLs for each GH and see if a consistent pattern remains amongst the same group homes. At this point, certain GHs have shown to have a consistently high number of AWOLs.
 - Several confounding factors have to be controlled to identify a direct correlation between GH treatment of youth and AWOLs. For example, a high AWOL rate for a GH could only mean that that particular GH gets higher risk youth.
 - Investigate GHs that have an unusually high number of AWOLs compared to other GHs to see possible reasons.
 - Interview youth during investigation.
 - Create a plan of action based on results (directives for GH, staff training, etc).
 - Monitor GH to see if trend has stopped after implementation of programs or directives.
- 4) During the month of April, there was a positive correlation detected between bench warrant requests and timely bench warrant issuance and effect on youth detention. As in, the longer time it took to issue the bench warrant, the less likely it was for the youth to be detained that same month:

Recommendation:

- Regardless of strong or weak correlations, consider the importance of having a bench warrant issued as soon as possible for an AWOLED youth. Overall, the sooner a bench warrant is issued, the more likely it is that the youth will be detained by the end of the month (as several previous months' data has shown).

Final Remarks on AWOLs: Similar to last month, all 'insignificant' AWOLs were also incorporated into the data this month (i.e. youth AWOLing for an hour). Certain trends relating to race, age, and sex continued to mirror the previous months' data.

iTrack (SIRs)-

There were **NO** child deaths or suicide attempts reported for the month of April 2014 in iTrack. The largest category for SIRs continued to be “other”, providing no description of the type of incident the youth was involved in.

Recommendation:

- Instruct all iTrack users to NOT select the category “other,” unless incident undeniably does not belong under any specific category. Another option is to remove the category “other,” and instead add additional specific categories (once it is determined why users are selecting “other”). Probation is currently discussing improvement ideas regarding iTrack with ISD software managers.

GROUP HOME MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS:

No Group Homes were placed on a HOLD status during the month of April 2014.

Child Abuse:

We had **6** referrals; **1** has been **Unfounded**, **5** are **Pending**.

Children Are Our Future (West Hills) – An anonymous caller reported to the CAOF site Manager that a female staff is having an inappropriate relationship with two female youth. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

Touch A Life (Los Angeles) - General Neglect allegation - Youth is alleging that he went AWOL from the GH because the living conditions were "nasty". Youth alleged that the food was over a year old, he contracted some sort of fungus, mattresses were stained with urine, GH was infested with "roaches" and the only time the GH was clean is on "inspection" days. The allegation is **Pending**.

Boys Republic – A youth alleged that another youth was making sexual threats towards him and then recanted his story. The allegation is **Pending**.

Children Are Our Future (Harvey House) – A youth alleged that a GH staff has been verbally / emotionally abusive towards him and spat on him after the youth pushed the staff. The allegation is **Pending**.

San Gabriel Children's Center (Enid House) – A youth alleged that two male staff made threats towards the youth and his family when was placed at the GH in March 2014. The allegation is **Pending**.

Phoenix House (LVT) - Youth disclosed that he and another youth engaged in sexual activity at the GH. The allegation is **Pending**.

Group Home Investigations:

We had **3** Group Home investigations during the month of April 2014; both are **Pending**. And 1 Follow-up investigation that was **Substantiated**.

Phoenix House (LVT) – A youth resident alleged that a staff and another youth resident were “messing around.” The allegation is **Pending**.

Maywright – A youth told staff that he engaged in sexual activity with a female youth from another site during an outing. The female youth (DCFS) told her father that she was "raped" by the youth. The allegation is **Pending**.

Rancho San Antonio (follow-up)- Youth was able to steal a cell phone from a teacher's desk drawer that was left unattended. Allegation was **Substantiated** for lack of supervision by the GH staff for failing to properly secure personal items.

Monitoring:

We are still finishing up the approval process for the 2012-2013, fiscal year, for which reports will be posted very soon. The 2013-2014, fiscal year is in progress and finishing up.

Permanency-

We are in various stages of preparation for **1 potential adoption** and **1 potential legal guardianship**.

In April 2014, we completed 0 Adoptions and 0 Legal Guardianships.